

# ***Learning to Critique Disability Children’s Literature Available to Teacher Candidates in Their Local Communities***

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## ***Abstract***

This work reports on teacher candidates’ critique of disability children’s literature available to them in their local communities. Blaska’s (2003) Images and Encounters Profile: Checklist to Review Books for Inclusion and Depiction of Persons with Disabilities was used in order to maintain consistency among teacher critiques. The findings suggest that the teacher candidates experienced difficulties in locating disability children’s literature in their communities. The majority of the disability children’s books that they were able to review, however, met Blaska’s (2003) Images and Encounters Profile criteria. The teacher candidates’ perspectives related to the critique experience are also discussed, and a table of the reviewed disability children’s books is included.

# ***Learning to Critique Disability Children’s Literature Available to Teacher Candidates in Their Local Communities***

## **The Need for Children’s Literature in Special Education**

High quality schools require a pool of highly qualified teachers who have knowledge related to inclusive pedagogy and who know how to translate this knowledge into successful instruction for the widest range of learners, including students with varying disabilities (Friend & Bursuck, 2006; Vaughn, Bos, & Schumm, 2007). Providing teacher candidates with access to a diverse disability children’s literacy environment in teacher preparation programs might be a first step to achieve these goals. Stelle (1999) agrees, “Children’s literature can be used to develop positive attitudes toward people with disabilities and to encourage positive peer relationships among children of differing abilities” (p. 123). Such literature also allows discussing challenging matters in ways that are not directly accessible via the more formal and clinical third person language found in a typical professional text (Wear, 1989).

The use of disability children’s literature is not a new concept in the college classroom. For example, Zambo (2005) promoted the use of picture books about characters with disabilities in her education psychology course to prepare future teachers to work more effectively with the population of secondary students. Using picture books also afforded opportunities to “make theory come alive” (p. 502).

Leftwich (2002) used diverse children’s literature with her teacher candidates in order to increase their understanding of disability as well as to augment their sensitivity to cultural diversity. Since most of her teacher candidates came from white and middle class backgrounds, they found the experience of reading and responding vicariously to culturally diverse children’s literature powerful for their future classrooms. However, in order to feel comfortable using such literature in their future classrooms, they all had to be taught how to use it.

Marlowe and Maycock (1989) conducted a study on the effects of a literary text based course in special education on teacher candidates' attitudes towards children with disabilities. They found that teacher candidates exposed to such literature held more positive attitudes toward children with disabilities than a control group instructed with a traditional college text based course. In their explanation they wrote:

*The use of contemporary literature may be one imaginative way to provoke reflection in teacher education students, which in turn, might improve expectations and responses toward children with disabilities. Literature provides an intimacy where we can learn how a child with a disability views himself or herself and what he or she has in common with all of us becomes clear. (pp. 3-4)*

Blaska (2003) urged teachers to incorporate disability children's literature as a part of their curricula regardless if they currently have a child with disability integrated in their program or not. Blaska argued:

*With exposure through literature, children will have the opportunity to ask questions and gain information prior to meeting a person with a disability or illness whether it occurs in school or in the community. (p. 9)*

As a strong advocate of disability diverse children's literature in instruction, I too, engaged my teacher candidates in critiquing literature available to them in their local communities. Their learning about and critiquing such literature became an object of the study reported in this work. The questions that guided this inquiry included:

- How accessible was the most contemporary disability children's literature to teacher candidates in their local communities?
- What type of diverse disability children's literature was available to the teacher candidates in their local communities?
- How many of the children's books under review did meet Blaska's (2003) *Images and Encounters Profile* criteria for *Inclusion and Depiction of Persons with Disabilities*, and for what major reasons?
- What were the teacher candidates' perspectives on the critique experience?

For the purpose of this study, the most contemporary literature was defined as literature published within the past five years at the time of the study. This definition is consistent with the subject literature suggesting that "Teachers should look for current and appropriate characterizations" before reading and recommending disability children's literature to their own students (Prater et. al, 2006, p. 22). Teacher candidates' local communities included their school libraries and classrooms, public libraries, bookstores, or even their own and friends' private collections.

## ***Method***

### **Participants**

Eight teacher candidates enrolled in a summer course on inclusion were asked to critique disability children's books for their depictions of disabilities and or illness. The course had a cross-categorical approach in which characteristics of students with particular disabilities and special needs were identified and appropriate teaching strategies were applied to accommodate students with special needs.

The teacher candidates were six females and two males (See Table 1 for demographic information about these teacher candidates), aged from twenty-two to forty-one years old. At the time the course began, they all held bachelor's degrees in such various areas of expertise as English, math, chemistry and physics, accounting, and public relations/journalism. They also differed in terms of their teaching experience, ranging from full time teaching (n=2), part time teaching (n=1), substitute teaching (n=1), working as a teacher aide (n=1) to not having any teaching experience (n=3).

## Data Collection

The teacher candidates used Blaska's (2003) *Images and Encounters Profile*, a structured checklist consisting of ten criteria to critique the most contemporary children's books with characters with disabilities and illnesses found in their local communities. More specifically, using *Images and Encounters Profile* entries for each reviewed book, the teacher candidates examined "the storyline, language, or illustrations" (Blaska, 2003, p. 199) and indicated if the criteria listed below were present in the books under review.

The ten criteria included:

1. Promotes empathy not pity
2. Depicts acceptance not ridicule
3. Emphasizes success rather than, or in addition, to failure
4. Promotes positive images of persons with disabilities or illness
5. Assists children in gaining accurate understanding of the disability or illness
6. Demonstrates respect for persons with disabilities or illness
7. Promotes attitude of "one of us" not "one of them"
8. Uses language which stresses person first, disability second philosophy
9. Describes the disability or person with disabilities or illness as realistic (i.e., not subhuman or superhuman)
10. Illustrates characters in a realistic manner (p. 199).

According to Blaska's protocol (2003), teachers should check "Yes," if the criterion was addressed positively, "No," if the criterion was addressed negatively, and "Not Present," if the criterion was not evident. In addition, the teacher candidates were asked to make open-ended comments in response to each profile criterion, which indicated what prompted their choices. Some offered commentary that was elaborate and supported with direct quotes from the reviewed children's books, while others briefly explained their selections.

I provided the teacher candidates with a Cover Page for Each Reviewed Children's Book so that they could record basic characteristics of the reviewed children's books (e.g., author, title, year of publication, genre, target disability, and so on).

At the end of the review process, the teacher candidates filled out a basic demographic information survey and prepared a paper in which they discussed the process of identifying and

reviewing the children's books with disabilities and or illness. They also shared their perspectives related to the critique experience as a whole.

## **Data Analysis**

Data analysis included reading and rereading the teacher candidates' written reports on their process of locating the required books and obtaining general information about the range of literature available to them in their local communities. As a result of this analysis, the theme of challenges related to the process of finding disability children's literature emerged.

Next, a table summarizing the general characteristics of the critiqued children's books was prepared. Data analysis also consisted of the review of the teacher candidates' completed *Images and Encounters Profile* entries for each of the books. Frequency counts were used to tabulate the number of books that met positively each of the *Images and Encounters Profile* criteria.

The teacher candidates' open-ended comments about each of the critiqued books were further read and reread in order to identify and categorize the major reasons they offered in support of their ratings.

Finally, the teacher candidates' written reports were again read in order to examine their perceptions on the critique experience as a whole. Major patterns in their plans for inclusion of disability children's literature in their future classrooms emerged from this analysis.

## ***Findings***

### **The Most Contemporary Disability Children's Literature in the Teacher Candidates' Local Communities**

In answer to the first research question: How accessible was the most contemporary disability children's literature to teacher candidates in their local communities, teacher candidates reported major challenges. One teacher candidate summarized this sentiment in this way, "Compared to the number of stories about sports, dinosaurs, and mischief, there is not a wide variety of children's books dealing with a disability to choose from." As reported by the following two teacher candidates, a major challenge was meeting the requirement that the books for the critique be contemporary (published within the past five years at the time of the study):

*I went to my local elementary school library and found two really good chapter books on children with disabilities...but surprisingly there were not many that were published within our criteria, the last five years...I decided to try Barnes & Noble's Bookstore; here again I was surprised that there were not many recent publications available, even though they have a small section just on children with special needs.*

*Children's books including a disability or illness are hard to come by. Many of the books that I found were preparation books for parents or teachers expecting or dealing with a child suffering from a particular disability or illness.*

Another challenge reported by the teacher candidates was a limited diversity of disability represented in the very few books that they managed to find. A teacher candidate protested, "I found many books centered on the same disabilities. There was little variety to choose from, and the illness aspect of the assignment was almost non-existent."

Several teacher candidates noticed that the librarians themselves had no recollection of even having such books in their own libraries as they were often surprised at a very request of helping the teacher candidates to find such books. This teacher candidate wrote to this affect, "While I was at the libraries in the children section searching for these books I noticed that when I asked the librarians for help, they looked at me kind of funny."

The limited diversity of the most contemporary books with characters with disabilities in the teacher candidates' local libraries meant fewer opportunities for their users for independent reading about disabilities and illness. It also led to fewer chances for teachers and parents to look for such books in the first place. This teacher candidate made this point most clear when she wrote,

...there are not many children's books on disabilities that are easily accessible to parents. Unless a parent wanted to find a book with a disability to help their child with a better understanding, I don't think the chances of a child going in to a library and picking up one of these books to read because it's interesting is very likely.

Like other teacher candidates in this study, this teacher candidate was determined to change this situation, as reflected in this call to fellow teachers: "It is especially important for us as teachers to make sure that children are exposed to this kind of literature."

### **General Characteristics of the Identified Disability Children's Literature**

In the following section, I address the second research question: What type of diverse disability children's literature was available to the teacher candidates in their local communities?

A total of eighty children's books were originally located in the teacher candidates' communities. However, twenty eight of these children's books were excluded. They either did not meet the requirement of being published within the past five years or they were the same books reviewed by more than one teacher candidate. This left fifty two (n =52) different children's books identified by the teacher candidates in their local communities to be included in this analysis (See Appendix for Table 2 Summary of the General Characteristics of the Reviewed Disability Children's Books). The books found were published between 1999 (n=12), 2000 (n=9), 2001 (n=12), 2002 (n=10), 2003 (n=7), and 2004 (n=2).

The books represented seven genres as identified by the teacher candidates. These were: fiction books (n=27), picture books (n=15), non-fiction books (n=5), easy-reading books (n=2), chapter book (n = 1), biography (1) and a pamphlet (n=1). Furthermore, the identified books represented varied reading levels, from baby-preschool (n=6), elementary and middle school ages 4-8 (n=24), high school ages 9-12 (n=20) to young adulthood ages 12-up (n=2). Most frequently they were published by the Woodbine House (n=6), Albert Whitman (n=4), Viking (n=3), and Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers (n=3).

All together, the identified books depicted characters with eleven different categories of exceptionality, based on the federal definitions of disability (Vaughn, Bos, & Schumm, 2007), and two types of chronic illnesses. The categories included: mental retardation (3), Down syndrome (5), Tourette syndrome (2), visual impairments (9), hearing impairments (5), learning disabilities (5), speech and language impairments (2), orthopedic impairments (9), other health impairments including ADD and/ ADHD (4), multiple disabilities (5), and developmental disabilities (1). Two types of chronic illnesses were leukemia (1), which is one of the most

common forms of cancer in young children, and schizophrenia (1), which is one of the most common forms of mental diseases characterized by severe brain dysfunction. Chronic illnesses are often referred to as other health disabilities or impairments (Blaska, 2003). In this study, however, chronic illnesses are reported as a separate category.

The teacher candidates noticed, however, that the authors of the identified children's books used alternative terms for the federal categories of disability and illnesses. Some terms differed only slightly from the federal disability terms, whereas others differed more significantly. For instance, a federal disability category such as hearing impairment was referred to as deafness and deaf by several authors. Similarly, a federal disability category such as an orthopedic impairment was used to describe disability categories such as cerebral palsy, physically impaired, physical disabilities, missing limbs, wheelchair users and orthopedic impairments. These differences might reflect the authors' unfamiliarity with the 1990 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandates for the use of "people first language for referring to people with disabilities" (Vaughn, Bos, & Schumm, 2007, p. 5). Alternatively, the authors might have chosen to use a more simple language to accommodate their audience: children.

The teacher candidates observed a striking asymmetry in gender differences in characters with disabilities in the books they critiqued. They found more books depicting male characters ( $n=32$ ) than female ones ( $n=11$ ). Eight books ( $n=8$ ) portrayed characters with disabilities representing both males and females. In one book a character with a disability was portrayed as an object—a young car ( $n = 1$ ). Interestingly, when characters were portrayed as animals, a disproportional ratio of male animal characters ( $n=3$ ) to female animal characters ( $n=1$ ) was maintained.

The teacher candidates reported a similar asymmetry in the ethnic background of characters with disabilities depicted in the books they reviewed. The majority of characters with disabilities were portrayed as Caucasian White ( $n=32$ ). Six characters with disabilities ( $n=6$ ) were of African-American origin. Six books ( $n=6$ ) displayed images of disabilities in characters from diverse ethnic (mixed) backgrounds. Only one book presented images of a character with a disability with Asian background.

The limited access to diverse disability children's literature in the local communities in this study is consistent with the findings reported in previous studies. For instance, Blaska (2004), who analyzed childhood programs in the Minnesota professional communities, including Head Start, nursery schools, early childhood special education and center-based childcare, found that while most of these programs had many books depicting a diversity of cultures (73% had 1-10 books with multicultural components in them), few had books depicting characters with disabilities in them. Similarly, Worotynec (2004, Winter), who examined the New York Public Library's (NYPL) children's book collections for both teachers and parents, found that although children's books from the "100 Picture Books Everyone Should Know" identified the themes related to multiculturalism, they did not provide a balanced discussion of ability/disability issues. Inadequate access to diverse disability children's literature in both this study and previous research may have well contributed to parents' and other professionals' somewhat limited awareness of disability/ability issues through such literature.

## ***The Images and Encounters Profile and the Specific Disability Children's Literature***

In the following section, I discuss answers to the research question: How many of the books under review did meet Blaska's (2003) *Images and Encounters Profile* criteria for *Inclusion and Depiction of Persons with Disabilities*, and for what reasons?

### **Promotes empathy not pity**

The teacher candidates reported that thirty nine (n=39) books (See Appendix for Table 3 Summary of the Images & Encounters Profile) promoted the themes of empathy towards individuals with disabilities or illness for a variety of reasons. For instance, some books were recommended as reinforcing the themes of empathy because they depicted characters with disabilities as those sharing a series of familiar and age appropriate activities with their peers. One such example is the book *Susan Laughs*, by Jeanne Willis (2000), in which the main character, a young redheaded girl in a wheelchair is shown as a cheerful and energetic child involved in a variety of activities such as: horseback riding, math, and swimming with her friends.

Other books were considered as aiming at empathic awareness because they created characters with disabilities who were not afraid to talk about their emotions and feelings related to having a disability, and thus to project this newly found awareness to others. In the book, *My Name is not Slow*, by Autumn Libal (2004), the young readers were coached on how to increase their understanding of a child with Down syndrome's situation, feelings, and motives so that they were able to discern and interpret their own emotional states, and thus easily identify with the character.

Additional reasons included attention to a variety of assistive technology devices used by characters with disabilities to compensate for the challenges they experienced related to specific disability conditions, and alternative ways of learning and doing things. This teacher candidate illustrates this latter observation in the context of *All Kinds of Friends, Even Green!*, written by Ellen B. Senisi (2002). He wrote,

This story actually has real photographs of the student with the disability. Therefore, when you see a picture of the student doing different activities, you realize that he is a child just like any other child. He just has to find different ways to complete the same tasks.

### **Depicts acceptance not ridicule**

Forty one (n=41) books were categorized as depicting acceptance towards individuals with disabilities. Again, a variety of reasons were offered by the teacher candidates for considering books as the ones "promoting the themes of acceptance." Most were defined as such because they shared stories about typical school and friendship relationships between children with and without disabilities. Within this context, one teacher candidate wrote this about the main character with Down syndrome in *Russ and the Almost Perfect Day (A Day With Russ)*, by Janet Elizabeth Rickert and Pete McGahan (2001).

His friends play with him; his friends invite him to birthday parties; he and his friends ride a scooter and play hula hoop during gym; and together with his friends they visit snakes during their science class.

Interestingly, the teacher candidates also highly rated books which equated acceptance with friendship not only among human beings but also between human beings and non-human beings also affected by disability. *All Kinds of Friends, Even Green!*, written by Ellen B. Senisi (2002), is an example of such a book. The book gives a glimpse into the life of a young boy, Moses, who uses wheelchair and becomes a friend with Zaki, an iguana with missing toes. According to the teacher candidates, the young readers could easily learn from this book that disability is an issue that affects both human and non-human beings, and that pets with disabilities can become children's cherished friends.

#### **Emphasizes success rather than, or in addition, to failure**

Forty eight (n=48) of the books were praised for creating opportunities for characters with disabilities to succeed. Yet, the concept of success meant a lot of different things in the context of different books. Some books were categorized as promoting opportunities for success because they showed school environments with youngsters with disabilities having full access to the general curriculum, and their achievements were reported in various age appropriate activities. For instance, one teacher candidate argued that Dustin, a young boy with Down syndrome in the book, *Dustin's Big School Day*, by Alden R. Carter (1999), is shown "doing many academic activities such as: math, spelling, and geography. He is succeeding in each activity."

Also, the books that emphasized their characters' with disabilities efforts of independence were highly rated on the success dimension. For instance, *The Alphabet War: A Story about Dyslexia*, by Diane Burton Robb (2004), illustrates such a successful journey for independence of a youngster named Adam. As almost all peers in his class mastered the skill of how to read, Adam struggles to make sense of letters due to his dyslexia. With help of his family and a tutor, Adam begins to believe in himself and his ability to learn to read. "Adam reads a book independently. He is also very good at science projects and building things," reported a teacher candidate.

Similarly, the teacher candidates observed that the books which created characters with disabilities driven by curiosity, vitality, and spontaneity combined with a general sense of happiness illustrated that success in the lives of children with disabilities. One such book is *Let's Talk About Being in a Wheelchair*, by Melanie Ann Apel (2002). "The author tells about a variety of successful people who use wheelchairs, including Christopher Reeve, Robby, and Maisey," commented one teacher candidate. "The book stresses the fact that we should not categorize people with disabilities as "special" or different, because all people are with most of the same goals and desires for success," wrote another teacher candidate.

#### **Promotes positive images of persons with disabilities or illness**

Forty nine (n=49) reviewed books were classified as meeting this criterion, sometimes because they depicted characters with disabilities with positive personality traits such as being happy, joyful or playful individuals. "The book shows many pictures of disabled children, happy and participating in class and in sports like everyone else," commented the teacher candidate who reviewed *Don't Call Me Special*, by Pat Thomas (2002). Similarly, in response to *Chang and*

*the Bamboo Flute* (Hill, 2002), another teacher candidate argued, “Illustrations show happiness and portray ‘normal’ interactions, moving beyond the characters’ disabilities.”

At other times, teacher candidates considered books as promoting positive images of individuals with disabilities when they shared stories of friendship relationships between children with and without disabilities. A teacher candidate who reviewed *Granny Torrelli Makes Soup*, by Sharon Creech (2003), shared this sentiment too when he reported that his book “tells about friendships and accomplishments of Bailey, the main character.”

Still other books were considered as promoting positive images of individuals with disabilities because they portrayed characters that had a sense of humor. “The main character has a good sense of humor, and good values, and loves his grandparents,” wrote a teacher candidate about *95 Pounds of Hope*, by Anna Gavalda (2003). Similarly, the main character with a disability in *Russ and the Firehouse*, by Janet Elizabeth Rickert (2000), “is enjoying helping out with the chores; he is always smiling, and the firemen tell him he is a big help,” argued another teacher candidate.

### **Assists children in gaining accurate understanding of the disability or illness**

According to the teacher candidates in this study, forty books ( $n=40$ ) met this criterion when their authors provided balanced descriptions of individuals with disabilities, including both their strengths and limitations. “Kate’s mom gives a very good description of Timmy’s strengths and weaknesses, and Timmy talks about some of the emotions he experiences because of his disability,” argued the teacher candidate who reviewed *What’s Wrong With Timmy?*, by Maria Shriver (2001).

Also, books with detailed information on how to modify activities for individuals with disabilities both at home and at school were rated highly on the accuracy factor. “This book explains Taylor’s therapy sessions and the stretches he does at home. It also tells what the disability is and shows how Taylor is affected by it,” reported a teacher candidate who critiqued *Rolling Along: The Story of Taylor and His Wheelchair*, by Jamee Riggio Heelan (2000). Similarly, the book, *Moses Goes to School*, by Isaac Millman (2000), “discusses some of the adaptations that Moses uses to learn, such as vibrations, computers, and sign language,” commented another teacher candidate.

Several books were considered as accurate representations of those with disabilities because they were told by individuals with disabilities themselves, representing thus “the insiders’ point of view.” Teacher candidates agreed that this was true for these two books, *Animal Helpers for the Disabled*, by Deborah Kent (2003) and *A Corner of the Universe*, by Ann M. Martin (2002).

### **Demonstrates respect for persons with disabilities or illness**

The teacher candidates reported that forty seven ( $n=47$ ) books demonstrated the themes of respect towards individuals with disabilities. This was evident in books that portrayed children with disabilities with the same tasks and activities as their age non-disabled peers, as in *Moses Goes to School*, by Isaac Millman (2000). In this book, “Children respect Moses because he does all of the same things that they like to do: use the computer, listen to music, and write letters, thus depicting the disabled characters as having friends,” commented one teacher candidate.

Another reason for considering books as the ones that promote respect for individuals with disabilities that teacher candidates mentioned were emphasizing a whole range of personality traits. For instance, a teacher candidate noted courage in *Animal Helpers for the Disabled* (Kent, 2003), when he wrote, this book “shows their struggles and triumphs. You have respect for their courage.” Another teacher candidate observed leadership in *Loud Emily*, by Alexis O’Neill (1999).

### **Promotes attitude of "one of us" not "one of them"**

Forty books (n=40) received a positive rating with regard to this criterion. According to the teacher candidates, the books which promoted the themes of "one of us" not "one of them" depicted individuals with disabilities as actively involved in developmentally and age appropriate activities. “Dustin participates in almost all of the same activities as the rest of the children, and even when he returns from his pull out sessions, he joins in whatever they are doing,” wrote the teacher candidate who reviewed *Dustin’s Big School Day*, by Alden R. Carter (1999). “Kate realizes that she and Timmy have similar interests and Kate invites Timmy to play basketball with her and her friends,” commented the reviewer of *What’s Wrong With Timmy?*, by Maria Shriver (2001). Yet another teacher candidate noted that in *Chang and the Bamboo Flute*, by Elizabeth Star Hill (2002), the main character, “Chang, is included in his family and community.”

The attitude of “one of us” not “one of them” was also present when individuals with disabilities were perceived by their peers as whole persons, human beings with gifts and talents as well as with areas needing improvement. A teacher candidate saw this in *Dyslexia* (Wiltshire, 2003), “The book points out that we all have strengths and weaknesses, therefore we need to help each other to do well in areas that we are lacking.”

### **Uses language which stresses person first, disability second philosophy**

Thirty three (n=33) of the reviewed books were categorized as those in which “people first” language was applied. In these books, individuals with disabilities and illness were depicted as having strengths, abilities, dreams, and desires. Only after such introductions did the reader learn about the limitations and challenges related to specific disabilities that their characters encountered in their lives. For instance, in the book, *Susan Laughs*, by Jeanne Willis (1999), “Susan is introduced, and her activities are listed. It is not until the end of the book that the reader is aware of her disability,” explained one teacher candidate.

Furthermore, in these books the authors empowered characters with disabilities to choose the way they wanted to be addressed and the way they wanted to be described. For example, “Eddie tells his story and describes himself first” in *Eddie Enough*, by Debbie Zimmett (2001), and “Bobby refers to himself as Bobby the Missing Person and Bobby the Human Hidden Camera” in *Things Not Seen*, by Andrew Clements (2002).

Still other books were characterized as using politically correct language in reference to individuals with disabilities when the authors focused on the positives, as in *Otto Learns about his Medicine*, by Matthew Galvin (2001). The teacher candidate who reviewed this book reflected about this attitude in this way, “This book only talks about the attributes. It always uses name not disability.” A teacher candidate who reviewed *Looking Out for Sarah*, by Glenna Lang

(2001), observed too that her author avoided in the whole book the direct use of the disability label such as “Never says “blind” just implied.”

### **Describes the disability or person with disabilities or illness as realistic (i.e., not subhuman or superhuman)**

Forty seven (n=47) of the reviewed books were reported to include realistic images of individuals with disabilities and illness. For instance, in the context of the book, *Sarah’s Sleepover*, by Bobbie Rodriguez (2000), one teacher candidate wrote, “The book mentions some things that Sarah is good at such as finding her way in the dark and some things she has trouble with, such as going up steps.”

Several books were given credit for realistic images of individuals with disabilities and illness when they focused on affective and emotional aspects of living rather than on disability related experiences and feelings. One teacher candidate found this to be true for *Me and Rupert Goody*, by Barbara O’Connor (1999), “The story describes real fears any person may have. That is Rupert was very afraid of thunderstorms, which had nothing to do with his disability.”

Other teacher candidates considered the books as providing realistic images of those with disabilities when they discussed directly and honestly some of the limitations imposed by the disability. This teacher candidate illustrates this criterion in response to *Of Sound Mind*, by Jean Ferris (2001), “Theo watched them, knowing they were doing something he could never do with his sibling; he’d never be able to banter with Jeremy while they were both doing something that involved the use of their hands. There was a degree of spontaneity that he and Jeremy would never have if they had to wait until their hands were free to say what had popped into their minds.”

### **Illustrates characters in a realistic manner**

From the teacher candidates’ point of view, forty five (n=45) of the reviewed books depicted characters with disabilities in a realistic manner. In these books, a teacher candidate remarked, “Photos portray a very realistic view of disability,” as in *Someone Special Just Like You*, by Tricia Brown (1999). Similarly, “Pictures in the book show kids in typical school settings and at home practicing with parents,” reported the reviewer of *Dyslexia*, by A. Silverstein V. Silverstein, and L. S. Nunn (2001).

Still, other books were described as depicting characters with disabilities in a realistic manner when they discussed “thoughts and feelings very well in a realistic setting and under realistic circumstances,” as one teacher noted of *95 Pounds of Hope*, by Anna Gavalda (2003).

### ***The Teacher Candidates’ Insights on the Critique Experience***

I address teacher candidates’ responses to the fourth research question in this section: What were the teacher candidates’ perspectives on the critique experience? In general, the teacher candidates found the critique of the most contemporary disability children’s literature a positive learning experience. One teacher candidate explained, “I thought that this was a really interesting assignment. It was challenging yet interesting and extremely educational. After this project, I

now feel confident to incorporate children's books with disabilities into my classroom." "This research taught me the importance of having things represented in literature that are important issues not only to parents but also to children that have to live with them everyday," commented another teacher candidate. Still another teacher candidate discussed the following benefits of conducting the review of children's literature: This project "showed me a great way to analyze future inclusive materials; and it also gave me some new insight in how to apply data collected into classroom teaching theory."

Interestingly, even a secondary content specific teacher candidate, whose initial comments about the assignment echoed reluctance, eventually came along. The following excerpts from before and after the assignment reflections illustrate this transformation:

*[At the beginning of the assignment]*

*Trade Books? 'Yuck!' I don't think that I can learn about children with disabilities from a book, especially from a children's book. I'm mathematics major and I have no plans to teach literature for increased awareness in anything other than the history of mathematics.*

*[At the end of the assignment]*

This assignment has prepared me by wanting to learn more. I have begun to collect more books about other disabilities. I am collecting resources from online sites, journals, or books that I can store for later referencing. I know I can learn about the various strategies not only to assist the target child [a child with a disability] but also to use it to help all of my students.

Furthermore, many teacher candidates involved in this study believed that they learned the tools and skills for selecting high quality children's literature for inclusive classrooms and communities. These teacher candidates' reflections reflect this belief:

I believe that communication through children's literature will be one of the biggest goals of my teaching in an inclusive classroom setting. *The Images and Encounters Profile* works as a great tool also for finding good inclusive communication books, and if the books fit most all the criteria and have humor incidences, you know they will be a good communication tool in your inclusive classroom.

In my future classroom I plan to use children's literature representing children with disabilities as part of a unit on diversity. It is important to educate students about the many different types of people in the world and different ways in which they live. It would also prove beneficial to share these works with students who have disabilities, by helping them see that they are not the only ones who are disabled, that in fact there are many people in the world who are. Reading this type of literature may help them to effectively communicate themselves with others and feel more at ease with their situation.

The teacher candidates participating in this study also began to act as agents of change when they made calls such as these to the key stakeholders at their local schools and communities:

With an increasing number of school districts heading toward inclusion, there will be a greater percentage of students with disabilities in the general education classroom. In order to make the integration smoother, everyone in the building should be educated with the help of children's books about the disabilities that they may encounter, not just the teachers.

Teachers really need good tools like these types of books to open up the lines of communication among students with disabilities, regular students and other teachers.

## ***Discussion***

As evident from the above comments, the teacher candidates in this study started to acknowledge the important role that children's literature with positive images and depictions of individuals with disabilities can play in increasing awareness about disabilities in their future classrooms. They were also not discouraged with the challenges they faced while locating such literature in their own communities.

However, although eager to incorporate disability children's literature in their classrooms, the teacher candidates in this study seemed to lack what Rosenblatt (1978) refers to as aesthetic stance, an affective experience of reading and rereading the text for making more intimate and personal connections during the reading act. More specifically, none of teacher candidates talked about how the books they read made them feel personally. Neither did they reveal in their written reports any personal connections that they made with the characters with disabilities depicted in the books they critiqued. This was despite the fact that they all agreed that many of the books were written by the authors based on their personal experiences with a disability. The following teacher candidate's reflection illustrates such an understanding,

*Most of the authors that write about children with a disability have been inspired either by a family member or close friend with that disability, or they may have overcome a disability themselves as in the case of McNamee, author of Sparks... These books are written out of personal interest to increase awareness and openness to the disability.*

Even the teacher candidates who expressed an interest in reading more of the disability children's literature in the future tended to stay away from taking on an aesthetic stance in response to this literature. That is, they did not compare their personal reactions and feelings about disability in general with the emotions shared by the characters from the children's literature they critiqued. This was evident in the following reflective comments made by a teacher candidate who reviewed *Niagara Falls, or Does It*. This teacher candidate explained her reasons for the use of a particular book. She also speculated about her students' likely response to the book. She did not offer however her personal reaction to disabilities encountered in these texts:

*I would highly recommend it for inclusive classrooms, because it is so positive and does a good job of describing the problems in writing and expressing oneself that a person with dyslexia could have. It also shows how talented and creative people with dyslexia can be in other areas such as building or technical designs. Many children and teachers do not realize the struggle and extra effort some of their classmates have to go through to overcome a learning disability. This book does a good job of portraying the ability differences among several kids in the classroom.*

This apparent lack of an aesthetic response in this study is consistent with Leftwich's (2002) findings about her teacher candidates' responses to culturally diverse children's literature they read in her literature course. Leftwich (2000) wrote in this context:

*Although I thought that the books would evoke strong personal responses, the students often responded cautiously and impersonally. Specifically, they revealed very little about their own attitudes and values surrounding social differences stemming from ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, disability, or sexual orientation.... These preservice teachers' responses, like those of many school children, lacked personal connections to out-of-school lives or experiences (p. 5)*

Alternatively, in a later study, Leftwich's (2002) findings suggested that her preservice teachers tended to avoid the use of children's literature that might be "emotionally or socially provocative" (p. 4) in their future classrooms. This is because, as Leftwich's (2002) explained, they felt that "they needed to protect children from the harsh realities of everyday living" (p. 6).

The teacher candidates in this study, on the contrary, saw a lot of benefits coming from exposing their students without disabilities to the challenging aspects related to living with a disability. This attitude was evident in the following teacher candidate's call for having conversations with children about difficult topics such as disability. She observed, "If parents and teachers avoid the topic, they will not stir up any difficult questions or mixed feelings, but it is important for children because they will all meet someone with a disability at some point in their lives."

In this study, the teacher candidates' anti-protective attitudes towards "emotionally or socially provocative" disability children's literature were evident in their critiques of the books that did not provide young readers with realistic and accurate representations of individuals with disabilities. The following teacher candidate explained this stance most clearly in this excerpt:

Although young children may really need to understand that there aren't that many differences between children with and without disabilities, I think that some books aren't giving children a good perception of the differences. A few of the children's books seemed to neglect to point out that there are some differences that a child or adult with a disability might have to deal with or the book described the disability with very little detail. In *Rainbow Joe and Me*, Joe is blind, his disability isn't shown affecting him in any way. In the Helen Keller book, all they say about her life with her disability was "The next few years were very hard for Helen and her family. Helen could not tell people what she needed" (p. 8.) This seems to be quite the understatement. In *Moses Goes to a Concert*, the only thing that is pointed out to be different is that they held balloons during the concert to feel the vibrations.

What was further evident in the teacher candidates' comments is a shared awareness of the importance of using disability children's literature in a structured and thoughtful manner. "It is important that each of these books is followed by extra discussion to prevent students from making their own assumptions which could be incorrect," argued one teacher candidate. This belief is consistent with best practices that currently recommend guided reading as an effective approach to positive attitude change towards disabilities through exposing children to disability children's literature. Schrank and Engles (1981 cited in Blaska, 2003), who reviewed the professional literature on guided reading, noted, however, that caution should be practiced in selecting high quality disability children's literature. Exposures should be paired with activities that provide students with opportunities for clarification of any misconceptions about the disabilities recounted in the stories.

## ***Conclusions and Implications for Future Practice***

Educators are encouraged to use the books which satisfied in this study the *Images and Encounters Profile* criteria in their own classrooms and communities for establishing inclusive practices across the curriculum. As one teacher candidate put it, “the more of these criteria that are addressed positively, the more you would want to use the book in an inclusive classroom setting.” The books that were critiqued in this study are cross-referenced in this report with the *Images and Encounters Profile* criteria. It is hoped that, as such, they may be easily translated into the curriculum specific themes around disability awareness such as empathy, acceptance, or promotion of positive images and respect for individuals with disabilities.

The teacher candidates in this study found the critique of children’s books for inclusion of characters depicting disabilities and illness a positive learning experience. They also believed that it will assist them in promoting inclusive pedagogy in their own classrooms and communities. It is important, however, that teacher educators encourage teacher candidates to take on Rosenblatt’s aesthetic stance toward reading such literature (1986). This will allow them to become personally involved with the characters depicted in the stories they will be reading. Becoming a personally engaged and affective teacher candidate-reader is a critical aspect of becoming a successful teacher. Research suggests that the most successful teachers use affective strategies when reading and incorporate those strategies in their instructional planning (Gebhard, 2006). As educators, we must strive to prepare our teachers to be personally engaged and affective readers of the diverse disability children’s literature. Multiple exposures to disability children literature, accompanied by a variety of simulation activities designed to elicit personal feelings and associations related to experiencing varying disabilities, will help teacher candidates to become personally engaged with such literature. These experiences will also prepare teacher candidates to model such responses to their own students.

Like teacher candidates in this study, other teacher candidates’ local communities may not always be literacy rich environments. Creating a national online center with diverse disability children’s literature across the nation may be one way of helping these teacher candidates become engaged and affective readers of disability children’s literature in the near future.

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**Table 1 Demographic Information about the Participants**

Sex	Age	Years of Teaching Experience	Highest Degree Held	Grade level and/or subject taught
Female	23	1 year	Bachelors	7th/8th grade math
Female	41	0	Bachelors	Secondary Education
Male	26	5 years of substituting	Bachelors	English
Female	34	1 year as a part- time	Bachelors Mechanical Engineering Technology	7th-10th grade (substituted)
Female	24	2 years	Bachelors	Regents Chemistry and Physics and 7 <sup>th</sup> grade science
Female	23	0	Bachelors Public Relations/Journalism	None
Male	22	1year as teacher aid	Bachelors	Work with an Autistic Student
Female	24	0	Bachelors Science/Accounting	None

**Table 2 Summary of the General Characteristics of the Reviewed Disability Children's Books**

	<b>Book 1</b>	<b>Book 2</b>	<b>Book 3</b>	<b>Book 4</b>	<b>Book 5</b>	<b>Book 6</b>	<b>Book 7</b>	<b>Book 8</b>	<b>Book 9</b>	<b>Book 10</b>
<i>Title</i>	What's Wrong With Timmy?	Sarah's Sleepover	Moses Goes to School	The Silent Boy	The Alphabet War: A Story About Dyslexia	Dustin's Big School Day	Susan Laughs	Russ and the Firehouse	Rolling Along: The Story of Taylor and His Wheelchair	Sparks
<i>Author(s)</i>	Maria Shriver	Bobbie Rodriguez	Isaac Millman	Lois Lowry	Diane Burton Robb	Alden R. Carter	Jeanne Willis	Janet Elizabeth Rickert	Jamee Riggio Heelan	Graham McNamee
<i>Publisher</i>	Warner Books	Viking	Frances Foster Books	Houghton Mifflin Books	Albert Whitman & Co.	Albert Whitman & Co.	Henry Holt and Company	Woodbine Books	Peachtree Publishers	Wendy Lamb Books
<i>Year Published</i>	2001	2000	2000	2003	2004	1999	1999	2000	2000	2002
<i>Genre</i>	Fiction	Picture Book	Picture Book	Fiction	Picture Book	Picture Book	Picture Book	Picture Book	Picture Book	Fiction
<i>Reading Ages /Grade Level</i>	4-8 K-3	4-8 PreK-2	9-12 Baby-Preschool	4-8 5-8	4-8 PreK-3	4-8 PreK-3	4-8 PreK-1	4-8 K-3	4-8 K-3	9-12 4-6
<i>Found at</i>	Library	Library	Library	Library	Library	Library	Library	Library	Library	Library
<i>Target Disability/Illness</i>	Mental Retardation	Blindness	Deafness	Mental Retardation	Dyslexia	Down syndrome	Physically Impaired	Down syndrome	Cerebral Palsy	Learning Disabled
<i>Character Gender</i>	Male	Female	Male	Male	Male	Male	Female	Male	Male	Male
<i>Character Ethnicity</i>	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	Black	White	
	<b>Book 11</b>	<b>Book 12</b>	<b>Book 13</b>	<b>Book 14</b>	<b>Book 15</b>	<b>Book 16</b>	<b>Book 17</b>	<b>Book 18</b>	<b>Book 19</b>	<b>Book 20</b>
<i>Title</i>	Hooway for Wodney Wat	The Hickory Chair	Marguerite Makes a Book	Looking Out for Sarah	All Kinds of Friends, Even Green	Moses Goes to the Circus	Rolling Along with Goldilocks and the Three Bears	95 Pounds of Hope	Niagara Falls, or Does It?	My Name is not Slow
<i>Author(s)</i>	Helen Lester	Lisa Fraustino	Bruce Robertson	Glenna Lang	Ellen B. Senisi	Isaac Millman	Cindy Meyers	Anna Gavalda	Henry Winkler, Lin Oliver	Autumn Libal
<i>Publisher</i>	Houghton Mifflin Company	Arthur A Levine Books	J. Paul Getty Museum	Talewinds	Woodbine House Inc.	Frances Foster Books	Woodbine House Inc.	Viking	Grossett & Dunlap	Mason Crest
<i>Year Published</i>	1999	2001	1999	2001	2002	2003	1999	2003	2003	2004
<i>Genre</i>	Fiction Book	Fiction Book	Fiction Book	Fiction Book	Easy Reading	Fiction Book	Fiction Book	Fiction	Fiction	Fiction
<i>Reading Ages /Grade Level</i>	4-8 PreK-2	4-8 K-3	9-12 2-5	Baby-Preschool K-3	4-8 K-4	Baby-Preschool PreK-1	Baby-Preschool PreK-1	9-12 5-8	9-12 3-5	9-12 5-8
<i>Found at</i>	Jervis Public Library	Jervis Public Library	Utica Public Library	Jervis Public Library	Dunham Public Library	New Hartford Public Library	New Hartford Public Library	School library	Public Library	Public Library

<i>Target Disability /Illness</i>	Speech Impairments	Blind	Blind	Blind	Orthopedic Impairments	Deaf	Orthopedic Impairments	ADD	Dyslexia	Down syndrome
<i>Character</i>	Male	Male	Male	Female	Male	Male	Male/Female	Male	Male	Female
<i>Gender Character</i>	Rat Animal	Black	White	White	Black	White	Bears/Animal	White	White	White
<i>Ethnicity</i>	<b>Book 21</b>	<b>Book 22</b>	<b>Book 23</b>	<b>Book 24</b>	<b>Book 25</b>	<b>Book 26</b>	<b>Book 27</b>	<b>Book 28</b>	<b>Book 29</b>	<b>Book 30</b>
<i>Title</i>	Me and Rupert Goody	Let's Talk About Being in a Wheelchair	Brian's Bird	Don't Call Me Special	Russ and the Perfect Day	Dyslexia	Animal Helpers for the Disabled	Otto is Different	Loud Emily	Otto Learns about his Medicine
<i>Author(s)</i>	Barbara O'Connor	Melanie Ann Apel	Patricia A. Davis	Pat Thomas	Janet E. Rickert	A.Silverstein V.Silverstein L.S. Nunn	Deborah Kent	Franz Brandenberg	Alexis O'Neill	Matthew Galvin
<i>Publisher</i>	Douglas & McIntyre	The Rosen Publishing Group	Albert Whitman & Co.	Barron's Educational Services	Woodbine House	Franklin Watts	Franklin Watts	Greenwillow Books	Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers	American Psychological Association
<i>Year Published</i>	1999	2002	2000	2002	2000	2001	2003	2000	1999	2001
<i>Genre</i>	Fiction	Non-fiction	Fiction	Non-fiction	Fiction	Non-fiction	Nonfiction	Picture Book	Picture Book	Picture Book
<i>Reading Ages /Grade Level</i>	9-12 4-7	4-8 K-3	9-12 2-6	4-8 K-3	4-8 K-3	9-12 2-4	9-12 4-7	4-8 PreK-3	Baby-Preschool 1 PreK-2	4-8 PreK-3
<i>Found at Target Disability</i>	School Library	Public Library	Public Library	Public Library	Book store	Book Store	Local library	Local library	Local library	Internet Site
<i>Disability /Illness</i>	Mental Retardation	Physical disabilities	Blindness	All disabilities	Down syndrome	Dyslexia	Hearing/Vision Impaired	People missing limbs.	Turrets	ADD/ADHD
<i>Character</i>	Male	Male	Male	Male/Female	Male	Male/Female	Male/Female	Male	Female	It/Object
<i>Gender Character</i>	Black	White	Black	Mixed	White	Mixed	Dogs/Animal	Octopus/Animal	White	Young car
<i>Ethnicity</i>										

	<b>Book 31</b>	<b>Book 32</b>	<b>Book 33</b>	<b>Book 34</b>	<b>Book 35</b>	<b>Book 36</b>	<b>Book 37</b>	<b>Book 38</b>	<b>Book 39</b>	<b>Book 40</b>
<i>Title</i>	Chang and the Bamboo Flute	Someone Special Just Like You	Granny Torrelli Makes Soup	Eddie Enough	A Corner of the Universe	Ben, King of the River	Joey Pigza Loses Control	Goose's Story	Things not seen	Dyslexia
<i>Author(s)</i>	Elizabeth Star Hill	Tricia Brown	Sharon Creech	Debbie Zimmett	Ann M. Martin	David Gifaldi	Jack Gantos	Cari Best	Andrew Clements	Paula Wiltshire
<i>Publisher</i>	Douglas & McIntyre Ltd.	Library of Congress	Harper Collins	HarperCollins	Scholastic Inc	Albert Whitman & Company	Scholastic Inc.	Melanie Kroupa Books	Philomel Books	Raintree Steck-Vaughn

<i>Year Published</i>	2002	1999	2003	2001	2002	2001	2000	2002	2002	Publishers 2003
<i>Genre</i>	Fiction	Non-Fiction	Fiction	Fiction	Fiction	Fiction	Fiction	Easy reading	Fiction book	Chapter book
<i>Reading Ages /Grade Level</i>	4-8 K-2	4-8 K-3	9-12 5-8	4-8 K-4	9-12 5-8	4-8 1-3	9-12 4-8	4-8 PreK-3	9-12 6-12	9-12 5-8
<i>Found at</i>	Local Library	Local library	Local library	Internet Site	Local library	Local Library	Local Library	Local Library (Whitesboro)	Local Library (Whitesboro)	Local Library – Rome, NY
<i>Target Disability/ Illness</i>	Mute	Mixed.	Visual Impairment	ADHD	Schizophrenia	Developmental Disability	ADHD	Physical disability	Blindness & Physical	dyslexia
<i>Character</i>	Male	Male/Female	Female	Male	Male	Male	Male	Female	Male	Male/Female
<i>Gender Character</i>	Asian	Mixed	White	White	White	White	White	Goose/Animal	White	Mixed
<i>Ethnicity</i>	<b>Book 41</b>	<b>Book 42</b>	<b>Book 43</b>	<b>Book 44</b>	<b>Book 45</b>	<b>Book 46</b>	<b>Book 47</b>	<b>Book 48</b>	<b>Book 49</b>	<b>Book 50</b>
<i>Title</i>	Lumber Camp Library	Do you remember the color blue?	Simon's Special Sneeze Test	Russ and the Apple Tree Surprise	Rainbow Joe and Me	Of Sound Mind	Bluish	Helen Keller	Spider's Voice	Some Kids Use Wheelchairs
<i>Author(s)</i>	Natalie Kinsey-Warnock	Sally Hobart Alexander	Candida Korman	Janet Elizabeth Rickert	Maria Diaz Strom	Jean Ferris	Virginia Hamilton	Cynthia Klingel Robert B. Noyed	Gloria Skurzynski	Lola Schaefer
<i>Publisher</i>	HarperCollins Publishers	Viking Published by the Penguin Group	TSA Publication	Woodbine House	Lee & Low Books	Farrar Straus Giroux	The Blue Sky Press	The Child's World Inc.	Simon & Schuster	Capstone Press
<i>Year Published</i>	2002	2000	2002	1999	1999	2001	1999	2002	1999	2001
<i>Genre</i>	Fiction book	Biography about Sally	Pamphlet	Picture	Picture	Fiction	Fiction	Picture book	Fiction	Picture
<i>Reading Ages /Grade Level</i>	9-12 2-5	9-12 4-8	4-8 K-4	4-8 K-3	Baby-Preschool Pre-K	Young Adult 12-up	9-12 5-8	4-8 PreK-2	Young Adult 12-up	4-8 PreK-2
<i>Found at</i>	Local Library – Rome, NY	Local Library – Rome, NY	Hughes Elem. Library	Hughes Elem. Library	School Library	School Library	School Library	School Library	School Library	School Library
<i>Target Disability/ Illness</i>	Blind	Blind	Tourette Syndrome	Down Syndrome	Blindness	Deafness	Leukemia	Deaf and Mute	Mute	Physical Disabilities
<i>Character</i>	Female	Female	Male	Male	Male	Male	Female	Female	Male	Male/Female
<i>Gender Character</i>	White	White	White	White	Black	White	White	White	Spider/Animal	Mixed
<i>Ethnicity</i>										

	<b>Book 51</b>	<b>Book 52</b>
<i>Title</i>	The Gypsies Never Came	Some Kids are Deaf
<i>Author(s)</i>	Stephen Ross	Lola Schaefer
<i>Publisher</i>	Simon & Schuster	Capstone Press
<i>Year Published</i>	2001	2001
<i>Genre</i>	Fiction	Picture
<i>Reading Ages /Grade Level</i>	9-12 5-9	9-12 5-9
<i>Found at</i>	School Library	School Library
<i>Target Disability /Illness</i>	Physical Disability	Deaf
<i>Character</i>	Male	Male/Female
<i>Gender Character</i>	White	Mixed
<i>Ethnicity</i>		

**Table 3 Summary of the Images & Encounters Profile**

<i>Images &amp; Encounters Profile Criterion</i>	<i>Books with Positive Responses to the Profile Criterion</i>
<b>1. Promotes empathy not pity</b>	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 46, 47, 48, 51 ( <b>N=39</b> )
<b>2. Depicts acceptance not ridicule</b>	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 50 ( <b>N=41</b> )
<b>3. Emphasizes success rather than, or in addition, to failure</b>	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52 ( <b>N=48</b> )
<b>4. Promotes positive images of persons with disabilities or illness</b>	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52 ( <b>N=49</b> )
<b>5. Assists children in gaining accurate understanding of the disability or illness</b>	1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 30, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52 ( <b>N=40</b> )
<b>6. Demonstrates respect for persons with disabilities or illness</b>	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 50, 52 ( <b>N=47</b> )
<b>7. Promotes attitude of "one of us" not "one of them"</b>	1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 50 ( <b>N=40</b> )
<b>8. Uses language which stresses person first, disability second philosophy, i.e. Jody who is blind</b>	1, 2, 3, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 22, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38, 39, 41, 43, 47, 48, 50, 52 ( <b>N=33</b> )
<b>9. Describes the disability or person with disabilities or illness as realistic (i.e., not subhuman or superhuman)</b>	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 40, 41, 42, 43, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52 ( <b>N=47</b> )
<b>10. Illustrates characters in a realistic manner</b>	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 51, 52 ( <b>N=45</b> )

Note: The multiple types of responses to several of the **Images and Encounters Profile** criteria in context of the same book seemed not to be mutually exclusive. That is according to the teacher candidates, many books adhered to more than one criterion from **Images and Encounters Profile**. These multiple types of responses might be a result of the fact that the review of the children's literacy, similarly to the act of reading a literary work, is an interactive event in which the reviewers, as the readers, are involved in an interaction or transaction (Rosenblatt, 1986) between the text and the reader. Consequently, differing interpretations are possible as the meaning is negotiated by communication between text and reader.